**SECTION: HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**POLICY:** Mental Health **EFFECTIVE DATE:** insert date adopted

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for mental health leave for police officers and firefighters in compliance with Texas law, providing clear guidelines for accessing paid leave following traumatic events experienced in the line of duty.

**APPLICATION:**

This policy applies to all full-time police officers and firefighters employed by the City.

**DEFINITIONS:**

1. Traumatic Event: An incident involving actual or threatened death, serious injury, or physical abuse, either experienced directly or witnessed by the employee, occurring during the performance of job duties.

**PROCEDURES:**

1. Eligibility: Police officers and firefighters who experience a traumatic event while on duty are eligible for mental health leave.
   1. Leave Entitlement:
   2. Eligible employees are entitled to mental health leave without a deduction in salary or other compensation.
   3. The specific number of leave days available will be determined by the City and communicated to all employees.
2. Request Process:
   1. Employees must submit a written request for mental health leave to their immediate supervisors as soon as practicable following the traumatic event.
   2. The request should include the date and description of the traumatic event.
3. Approval Process:
   1. Supervisors will forward the request to the Human Resources Department for review.
   2. Human Resources may require verification from a licensed psychiatrist, psychologist, or mental health professional to substantiate the need for leave.
   3. Approved leave will be communicated to the employee in writing, detailing the duration and any conditions.
4. Confidentiality:
   1. All requests and related documentation will be handled with strict confidentiality, maintained separately from the employee's personnel file, and disclosed only as permitted by law.
5. Additional Support:
   1. The City may provide a list of available mental health services to support employees during and after the leave period.
6. Non-Retaliation:
   1. Employees will not face retaliation or adverse employment actions for requesting or taking approved mental health leave.